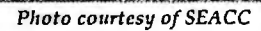


By Eileen Wagner and Alexandria Duguqua  
Whalesong Reporters

"The university has been unfairly deprived of lands that should have been its birthright," Sen. Murkowski said in a press release. "It's an inequity that needs to be

According to SEACC, the bill threatens the following old-growth forest areas important for fish and wildlife habitat: Kadashan, Berners Bay, Point Adolphus/Mud Bay, Lisianski Inlet, Calder-Holbrook,



*The University of Alaska owns this land near Ketchikan, which is known as Slide Ridge.*

Deputy Director Tom Fry of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management said the administration believes it has discharged the federal land-grant commitment to the university, and that if Sen. Murkowski persists

The bill is even unpopular with sport hunters and fishermen who usually align with Murkowski. The Alaska Outdoor Council, the state branch of the NRA, said it "strongly opposes" any further land grants that would transfer Tongass lands into private interests for development. Council President Rod Arno wrote, "These acres,

Continued on page 12

*Photo by Matt Miller*

*Spanish Professor Rick Bellagh (top) directs students during a fun exercise to acquaint them with Central American geography in Wednesday's class.*

*Report by Matt Miller*

Spanish Professor Rick Bellagh (top) directs students during a fun exercise to acquaint them with Central American geography in Wednesday's class.

The chains behind his door are folded up now, but it isn't uncommon for UAS Spanish Professor Bill Bellagh's small office to be full of students and coming for advice, extra help on the week's Spanglish or just stopping by to talk all about life. Bellagh, to each year, is in Spain for a semester, and he's expected to be out of town for the next 10 days.

This semester, Bellagh has over a 100 new students in his two sections each of Spanish 101 and Spanish 201. This year for the first time, Bellagh is offering an inter-semester class which will be a hands-on Spanish experience and allow students to travel through Mexico with him over the

Spanish is the fourth language that Bellagh has mastered and it's by far his favorite. His parents immigrated to the United States in 1956 during the Hungarian Revolution and met while obtaining their citizenship in Cleveland. Bellagh was raised in Cleveland speaking Hungarian and he didn't learn English until he was three. It was at this time that his older sister entered grade school and his parents realized their children would have an easier time if they began speaking English to them at home.

\* continued on page 12

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## Focus on Education: Are Standards The Answer?

Alexis Ross Miller  
Whalesong Editor

**B**enchmarks. Rubrics. Frame works. Educational content standards. Assessments. Exit exams or tests.

I've been hearing these words thrown around for the past year and have recently read columns by Gov. Tony Knowles and articles written by others on education and the focus Alaska should take this year and into the next century with exit tests for our students and with educational standards and assessments.

To be honest, it is all a little overwhelming. I for one am confused and I'm not ashamed to admit it. These terms are difficult to wrap my arms around and even more difficult to apply to realistic situations. And I'm thinking well if I am having difficulty with these concepts, what does it mean for the students in kindergarten all the way to those seniors in high school and their parents. How well are they all grasping these concepts? Theory is good, but what happens in reality?

I believe it is important that this on-going debate on educational standards continue and I think it is a good one. The dialogue is running and students, staff, teachers and professors, as well as parents all seem to be involved. That is the way it should work. It is a simple issue on the surface, but below the surface, it is much more complicated than many would like to think.

I certainly am no expert on this subject since I am neither a parent nor a teacher. But I am currently enrolled in a graduate program and I hope to obtain my master's degree to teach at a college or university much like UAS one day in the near future. Since I am looking at my future teaching career I am interested in educational standards and I am trying to understand the process that is occurring in Juneau and in Alaska as the state revamps and re-writes our standards.

For those of you who don't know, the Department of Education (DOE) has produced an award-winning booklet titled "Alaska Standards: Content Standards for Alaska Students," which lists the required standards for each discipline: math, English/language arts, science, geography, government and citizenship, history, art, world languages, technology and skills for a healthy life. You can receive a copy of this book from DOE by contacting them at 465-2800 or you can stop by the Whalesong Office and have one of our extra copies.

The booklet begins with a quote: "All children... rise easily to the common level. There the mass stop; strong minds only ascend higher.

But raise the standard, and, by a spontaneous movement, the mass will rise again and reach it."

Again, in theory I'd like to believe this quote since I'm a sucker for philosophical quotes like this one. But in reality is that statement really true? I don't know. I'm hoping that the many different groups working to revamp Alaska's educational standards will see that it

does.

It is with this in mind that I have chosen to focus this editorial and much of this issue on education and why I have decided to rerun a "My Turn" column by Gov. Knowles, which deals primarily with his Quality Schools Initiative. It recently appeared in the Juneau Empire and other Alaskan newspapers. It seems fitting that we should print this column again since there is a column in this issue, which addresses many of the key points in the governor's column (it appears on page 5).

I asked Scott Christian to draft a piece on standards and the revision process Alaska is currently undertaking (it too appears on page 5). He has been working diligently on this issue for

the past year. Christian is a former middle school teacher, a parent and a part-time professor at UAS. He is also the director of the University's Educational Technology Center. His column is lengthy, but I felt that it was necessary to understand this issue and I chose to run the entire piece (one of the few perks of being editor).

Two weeks ago I interviewed Dr. Douglas Reeves, the guru of the national standards movement. He has established an organization in Denver, which works on national educational standards and assessments and he serves as a consultant to school districts around the United States and abroad. Dr. Reeves was in Juneau and Alaska at the request of the Juneau Superintendent of Schools Mary Rubadeau and the Juneau-Douglas High School. Reeves gave Juneau high marks for the work that has been done on standards.

I am hoping to focus on education in general and standards in particular in subsequent issues of the Whalesong and would like to hear from students, faculty, teachers and professors, and others on Alaska's standards. What do you think? Let us know. You can e-mail the Whalesong at [jywhale@acad1.alaska.edu](mailto:jywhale@acad1.alaska.edu) or you can drop a letter or a column off at our office, which is located downstairs in the Mourtan Building. If you have questions and would like to talk about the format for these letters or columns call us at 465-6434.

*I believe it is important that this on-going debate on educational standards continue and I think it is a good one.*

## Setting priorities is the secret to time management

By Lori Exferd  
UAS Academic Advisor

**T**he other day I was meeting with a student who told me that she didn't have time to go to her classes anymore. We've all been through a crises or two of time management. And we've all said at one time or another, "I just need to make the time." However, we can't "make" time.

Time is an equal opportunity resource. There's only so much of it, and we all get the same amount of it. Then how is it that some people can make the most out of their time, where others always run out? The secret is to "find" the time. There are hundreds of different strategies to successful time management. Of course, we don't have time to go through all of them. But here are some tips that really do work:

1. **Set Priorities.** This does not mean making a to-do list. This means taking a look at the big picture of your life

right now, and finding out what's most important to you. Those things that are most important will take up the majority of your time. For some people, it's family. For others, it's work. And for most students, it's college. How we spend our time often is a reflection of what our priorities are.

2. **To-Do or Not-to-Do.** That is the question. Make to-do lists of things that need to be done each day, each week and during the month. This is also a good process for goal setting. Your to-do list can include everything from studying for an upcoming midterm to going to the gym three times a week for the next month. Always put the harder goals at the top of your list. When you first start out to get everything done, you have more energy and higher levels of concentration. But be sure to set realistic goals. You only have 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week. Make Not-to-Do lists also. This list should include time wasters that eat up your day or week.

3. **Use Calendars.** It may seem like overkill, but using a daily planner, a weekly planner and a monthly calendar really works! The daily planner keeps you on track each day, and the weekly and monthly calendars let you know what's ahead. Schedule fixed events first: class, work, sleeping, eating, traveling, study time, etc. Include scheduled time for errands. Nothing can fluster a person more than not hav-

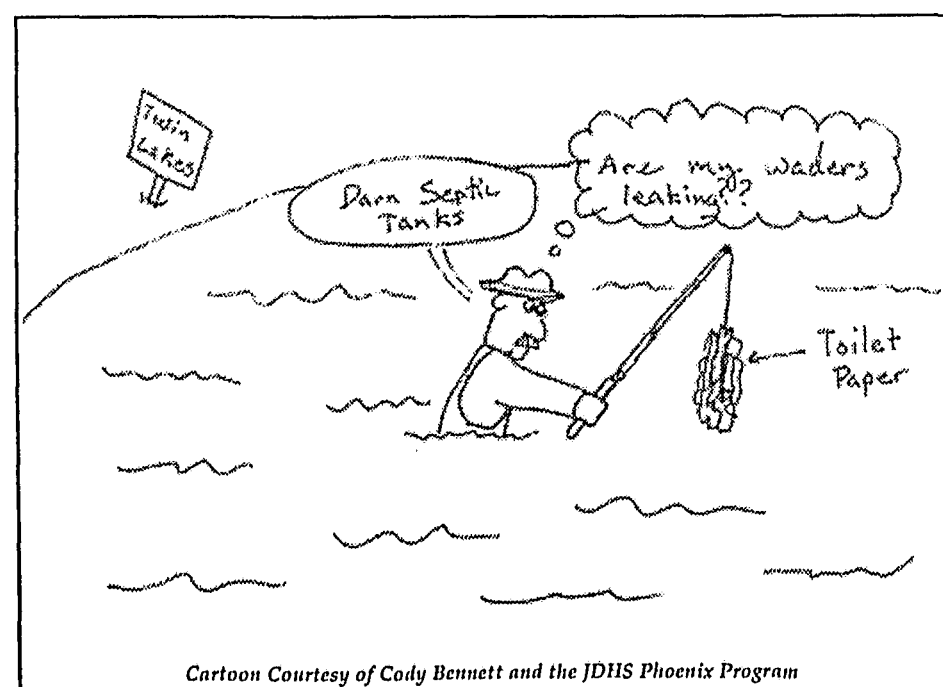
ing time to go buy groceries! Find time for fun. Those people who work hard are usually the ones who play hard too. And leave holes in your schedule. For those of us who are more spontaneous, these holes make time management seem less rigid.

4. **Reduce Distractions.** Roommates, children, music, television, friends stopping by... the list never ends. When you need to get something done, find a place you can go to that has few distractions. This place should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. Lying on your couch to read that not-so-exciting textbook is an instant remedy for sleep. Your goal is to find someplace you can focus, and that may mean sacrificing the comfort of your own home.

5. **Develop Habits and Routines.** The effort to manage your time may seem a bit too consuming at first. But all it takes is a little discipline and time to work out a schedule that lets you get everything done with time to spare. It may take a week or two of consciously filling in your planner and writing out a to-do list every day before it becomes second nature. And you'll find the results are worth the time invested.

We all strive for a well-balanced life. Success takes some type of time management. Start now with these basic tips, and find a system that works best for you. For more information and resources on time management stop by the Student Resource Center on campus or attend the program, "Finding the Time," which will be presented at the Student Housing Lodge on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m.

Lori Exferd has a master's degree in Education with an emphasis in College Student Personnel from the University of Wisconsin. She is employed in the Student Resource Center as an Academic Advisor.



## The Voluntary Circle

### Returning Favors and Favorable Returns

By Ruth Danner  
Whalesong Columnist

**W**hat goes around comes around. This truism is usually invoked in terms of payback for bad behavior, but it works on the positive side as well. The Voluntary Circle presents a forum where individuals can share their personal experiences in volunteerism. Some columns will tell other people's stories about how volunteers impacted their organizations and their lives. Other columns will tell how volunteering changed a person's life. Still others will tell about volunteering opportunities in our community.

You know how some experiences make an impression you never forget? Well, that's how I feel about that one moment that brought me to a commitment to volunteering. I want to tell you about it, but first let me give you some background.

I started my adult life some 20 years ago by marrying my high school sweetheart and having two beautiful children. They were the sweetest little babies and nearly perfect in every detail, except one. Both were born with the bones to their middle and ring fingers enclosed in one fleshy digit. Orthopedic surgery was the recommended solution, but as part of the working poor, we had no health insurance. We were directed through the system to Children's Orthopedic Hospital (COH)

in Seattle where thousands of dollars in hospital and doctor's fees over several surgeries were provided in part through the volunteerism and charity of others.

Seven years later, as a single, working mom, I met Barbara, my boss's wife. She had lost a son a few years before leukemia, and now she volunteered at COH because she said it gave her an opportunity to repay some of the kindness that had been done for her when Matthew was in the hospital. Not exactly a bolt from the blue, but her words simmered and worked their way into my thoughts until they shifted my focus and changed my life forever.

It started with COH Women's Auxiliary. Their big fund-raiser for the hospital was "Festival of Trees," a holiday event revolving around celebrity-decorated Christmas trees. The weekend began with an arts and crafts bazaar and holiday music festival during the day and ended with an elegant banquet and Christmas tree auction Saturday evening. I loved the holidays and I loved making little artsy-crafty things, but I had no experience in organizing such a massive event. And I certainly didn't run in the same circle with Seattle's celebrities.

That's the advantage to volunteering. Experience is not something you must bring to the table, but it's definitely something you will take away. It's an odd kind of economic exchange where the more you give, the more you receive. While I tried to repay the kindness done for me and my children, I gained experience and exposure in the process. I learned the ropes the first

year and by the second, became assistant director of the bazaar and music festival. Through the efforts of a few dedicated volunteers, we raised thousands of dollars to help continue the cycle of providing quality health care for children, regardless of their parents' ability to pay. The circle was complete, but the balance sheet remained tipped in my favor.

When I moved to Juneau, the home of my new husband, the following year, that experience and the references it added to my resume helped me secure a job at Klukwan, Inc., a local native corporation. It was Klukwan's emphasis on and encouragement of higher education that brought me back to college and to UAS. And once again I found myself on the receiving end of the contributions of others.

I applied for and received a \$500 grant from the financial aid office, which helped with tuition. Earning my bachelor's degree in 1992, I graduated with no real idea of where that scholarship money came from. It wasn't until later that I discovered the realities of tuition and scholarships and the like.

High as it may seem when you have to pay it, tuition only covers about 35% of the cost of providing a university education. The remainder is covered by an ever-diminishing state commitment and by contributions from organizations and individuals who believe strongly in the value of education and support it with their time and money.

Once again I am on the return side of the circle with the UAS Alumni Association. I serve

as the vice-president of the Alumni Association. Some of our most valued members make an annual contribution of \$25, which helps raise the \$4,000 we need to fund two \$2,000 scholarships each year. Others may design a banner or brochure, help plan and organize the graduates' brunch, sell raffle tickets, or help with the spring banquet and auction.

The list of opportunities for involvement are limited only by one's imagination and time. And the connections we make can open the doors to future endeavors and possible job opportunities. The Alumni Association hosts luncheons with Chancellor Marshall Lind, meets with local politicians and business owners, networks with other University of Alaska alumni, Board of Regents, and faculty and staff.

Now I am working to complete my MBA this May and keeping up with my management consulting business, but I still budget time for volunteering. I could cut back, but why?

The more I do, the wider my circle grows, compounding my efforts with ever increasing returns to both the institutions I support and to my own personal growth.

Ruth Danner is an MBA student at UAS and a consultant specializing in computers, business administration, and communications.

## Viewpoint

### UA Land Director: 'University is a good steward of its land'

By Martin Epstein  
UA Director of Land Management

**Y**ou don't have to believe in clearcutting to support Sen. Frank Murkowski's bill to convey federal land in Alaska to the University of Alaska, but let's talk about clearcutting for just a moment because opponents of the bill always cite clearcutting as "proof" that the university should not receive more land.

The harvesting of university timber, which frequently involves clearcutting (and occasionally involves selective harvesting) is in full compliance with all applicable laws. However, the simple fact is that clearcutting is ugly; and the fact that the forest grows back is not immediately evident. But on the Gulf Coast and in Southeast Alaska it is generally true. An example is the university's Whipple Creek II timber sale completed more than 3 years ago. This sale in Ketchikan included an area sometimes called "Slide Ridge." Recently a regeneration survey was conducted. The Forest Practices Act, which states "... seedlings of commercial tree species must average at least 200 trees per acre and must survive on site for a minimum of two years" is not only being met but several random plots (which do not constitute a scientific survey but do provide a general overview of established seedlings) distributed throughout the sale area indicated regeneration at more than 3,000 stems per acre.

The university is a good steward of its land. Its major projects take place with public notice, create jobs for Alaskans and place land on tax rolls to help generate income for local communities. The university develops and sells dozens of lots a year to Alaskans on which they build homes and recreational cabins.

Opposition to clearcutting need not mean that you are opposed to the university getting any additional land. To assert that if the university gets 250,000 or 500,000 acres of federal land, all of which will be subject to clearcutting, is simply untrue. The university will most likely diversify its land selections in order to reduce the risk of owning too much of a particular type of land or resource.

*As a result, of all the states that have received land grants, only Delaware received less than Alaska. Given the size of Alaska, no other state, by far, received a smaller portion of total state acreage for the support of higher learning.*

arctic biology and arctic engineering; and the economic and social dynamics of the circumpolar north.

At Cape Yakutat, the university is harvesting timber under an agreement negotiated and approved by SEACC, the Alaska Center for the Environment, Yakutat Fisherman's Association, Cordova District Fishermen United, the State Department of Natural Resources, the State Department of Fish and Game and others. University operations are monitored by the Alaska Departments of Natural Resources, Fish and Game and Environmental Conservation and several federal agencies under numerous state and federal laws, rules and regulations and the Alaska Coastal Zone Management Act, the Forest Practices Act and the Yakutat Area Plan (which in some respects is more stringent than the Forest Practices Act).

One-time timber harvest rights were conveyed to the university on 58,000 acres of the approximately 120,000 acres of state land with forestry designations in the Yakutat planning area. The university estimates its operator will harvest approximately 21 percent or 12,000 of these 58,000 acres with the re-

maining 79 percent left for wildlife, fisheries and other uses as mandated by the Forest Practices Act and the Yakutat Area Plan. Only about 10 percent of the state land with forestry designations in the planning area will be harvested under university management.

The University of Alaska is Alaska's only public land grant university and the history of its land grant began early in this century. In 1915 and 1929, Congress made federal land grants totaling close to 370,000 acres to the State for the exclusive use and benefit of the university. For a number of reasons, the University has received less than a third of the acreage allocated to it under these grants. The failure to transfer the total allotment was due primarily to the incompleteness of the federal government's survey of the region.

As a result, of all the states that have received land grants, only Delaware received less than Alaska. Given the size of Alaska, no other state, by far, received a smaller portion of total state acreage for the support of higher learning. Section 906 (b) of ANILCA does not change this inequity. The 75,000 acres granted under that section applied to a different grant of school lands and not to university trust lands.

If you are opposed to land development of any kind in Alaska, you should oppose Sen. Murkowski's bill, and the university's efforts to increase its land base. If you believe most of the land in Alaska should remain perpetually in the hands of the federal government, then you should oppose Sen. Murkowski's bill. On the other hand, if you support the university and its mission of education, research and public service or if you believe that more of Alaska's land should be in the hands of the state or the university or in private hands, and used to develop the economy and provide jobs for Alaskans, then you should consider supporting Sen. Murkowski's bill. The choice is yours.

Martin Epstein is Director of the University's Statewide Office of Land Management, which is responsible for managing and developing real estate owned by the University of Alaska.

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The University of Alaska Southeast student newspaper, The Whalesong, is a bi-monthly publication with a circulation of 1500 copies per issue. The Whalesong's primary audience is UAS students, although its broader audience includes faculty, staff, and community members. Whalesong will strive to inform and entertain its readers, analyze and provide commentary on the news, and serve as a public forum for the free exchange of ideas. The staff of the Whalesong values freedom of expression and encourages reader response.

The Whalesong editorial staff assumes no responsibility for the content of material written by non-staff members. The views and opinions contained in this paper in no way represent the University of Alaska and reflect only those of the author(s). The editorial staff is solely responsible for content. The Whalesong: Auke Lake Campus  
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Printing done by:  
Golden North Printers - Juneau



## Global Connections: your map to the world

News from UAS Students Studying Abroad

By Elizabeth Schelle  
UAS Study Abroad Director

In this column, I want to share with you "a day in the life" of UAS students, your friends, who are spending a semester or a year studying overseas. E-mail makes communicating internationally very easy and fun. I think you'll enjoy reading about their experiences. I may also include insight on studying abroad from the international exchange students who come to UAS from around the globe. The idea is to let you know what a great experience international living can be for you!

UAS is affiliated with the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) and the Northwest Council on Study Abroad (NCSA). Both of these programs make studying overseas easy and affordable for you. With these programs you can use your financial aid and work out credit transfers that will keep you on track toward your degree. We have a great deal of information on travel, study, volunteer, and work opportunities.

Taking time to live in another country and culture is a life-changing experience that can help you discover yourself and your abilities in ways that nothing else can. Talk to our students on campus who have been overseas and they can tell you about it firsthand. You can meet these students at the Global Connections club meetings at 1 p.m. every Friday in the Lake Room. Or contact Amelia Jenkins, club president, at 465-6466. You can make an appointment with me at the Student Resource Center, call 465-6457 or e-mail me at JNEBS. The opportunities are here for you — check them out!

\*\*\*\*

The following are excerpts of messages from Sean Damron, a sophomore in marine technology, who is spending a semester on the island of Fiji studying marine science. Damron is originally from Texas. He

writes:

"The university is made up of 12 member countries; a little over half of the student population is comprised of Indo-Fijians who were brought here between 1850 and 1920 in the indenture system with the other half comprising students from the member countries and about 60 exchange students. The member countries are Fiji, Tonga, the Marshall Islands, the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Niue, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Nauru, and Tokelau. At present the total pop. here is about 3,900 with 750 living on campus. Needless to say the campus diversity is in the extreme. It is really great though. Almost all of the different cultures had an event to show their colors for the university or I have been invited to attend private functions.

The Univ. is made up of four different schools: School of Humanities, Pure and Applied Sciences, School of Social and Economic Development, and the School of Law. This diversity of educational programs coupled with ethnic diversity makes every minute an interesting one. The best part about it is the fact that there is very little outward tension. I have seen none that was not centered around student council politics, which at present is a very hot subject. Theft from students and apathy after elections have made the executive board a very disliked group of people.

I would have to say that the greatest aspect of the life here is the friendly atmosphere that I am immersed in. My fellow students have tried to teach me aspects of almost every language spoken here, and the Fijians are quite adamant about me learning their language.

I found an island that, from which I have been told, is developed enough to go to and not so much that any of the deserted island aspects should be missed. Tavarua is the name and it's one of those places where documentaries of Fiji are filmed. The

surfers go there for one of the best breaks in the world and always mention the amazing hospitality. I have noticed a difference, pretty big in fact, in the way native Fijians welcome visitors and then treat them like kings and the way that the Indo-Fijians treat me. It has taken almost two and a half months for an Indian to offer to teach me any part of their language whereas the Fijians started almost to the day, the day I arrived. The Fijians almost force you to be the pampered one.

In Fiji there is a drink called Kava. It is consumed in a few other odd places around the world. The ritual is to sit around a big wooden bowl, a Tanoa, and pass half coconut shells full of this, also called Yaqona, around. It is a root that is pulverized and mixed with water. It tastes almost like dirty water but not quite, and sort of gets you drunk like alcohol does, but only when they mix it strong which only happens every once in awhile. Anyway, back to the story.

So I go out with students from one of the local provinces to raise money for their cultural group. One person can pay \$2 dollars and everybody drinks a bowl, one dollar and one or all of us has to stand, 10 cents and one person of the payee's choice drinks half a bowl, 20 cents and it's a whole bowl, if you don't want the provided bowl and haven't had too much to drink then you have to double the money and on and on. It is a real part of the tradition.

You can find Kava drinking in many places and it's allowed on campus in certain places whereas alcohol is not. And back to the story again.

They made me sit, with twenty of us around the bowl, at the head of the room with everyone else on the other half of the bowl: facing the door with your back to the wall is traditionally the chief's spot. Only a couple would come within five feet of me and if I wanted to talk I had to move. It was really funny and by the time I was finished

I was "grogged"—grog being another way to refer to Kava and it also describes the feeling you get when you have had enough.

So as I ramble on at 1 a.m., putting off typing my assignment, to finally describe a day in the life of a student at the University of the South Pacific. On a good day I'm out of bed around 6:30 a.m. and have a shower and shave. Breakfast starts at 7 a.m. and if I don't have class at eight I usually finished around then. Studying, typing in the computer lab, a visit to the library, and classes (15 hours a week) are what fill the time 'til lunch, which starts at noon. Sitting around the table is quite common, so barring having class, lunch is about an hour or as much as two. Then more of the same 'til dinner at 5-6 p.m. with more chat across the table or outside enjoying the cooling of the day.

Back to the drawing board for 2-3 hours and late night tea and buns, which usually takes many forms depending on the financial standing of the participants—coconut, coffee, crackers and butter, once some chocolate cake that I am receiving from making some wire-framed clothing for a local wish-to-be designer. This may last 'til midnight and then it's off to bed. Vinaka vakalevu, moce or thank you very much, see ya.

All in all, even in the city it's paradise. There are bananas, coconuts, mangos, kumquats, papaya, and limes of all sorts, and other fruit right behind the dorm and quite often we just help ourselves. Really big WOW. So enough rambling about paradise. Please say hello to everyone."

Elizabeth Schelle wears many hats at UAS. She is a Communications professor, a counselor in the Student Resource Center, as well as the advisor to the student group, Global Connections, and the Director of the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP).

charges producers of gas and oil.

Polls have shown that a disproportionate share of state residents are political independents who have moved here to work for a few years and feel little connection to local public institutions. Most Alaskans pay only federal taxes and municipal property taxes, and want to keep it that way. Lawmakers are loath even to discuss a new tax to help pay for higher education or other services.

"Suggest a tax and you are just about suggesting yourself out of office," says Robert Kuhner, a professor of philosophy at UAA and a leader in the Faculty Senate.

"Regardless of the best intentions of the legislation, the opposition is going to say 'tax-and-spend liberal,'" says Representative Tom Brice (D-Fairbanks). Although he is considered one of the university system's strong supporters, he says he would not take the political risk of sponsoring such a bill.

For more than a decade, the legislature has dealt with any budget shortfalls caused by recessions or declining oil prices by cutting state spending on higher education and other public services.

The university system's current general fund appropriation of \$164 million is two percent less than it was in the previous fiscal year, when it was down one percent from the year before. The university system got fewer dollars from the state this year than it did in 1986.

To help cover its most recent budget shortfall, amounting to \$11 million, the system eliminated about 200 positions, or nearly 6 percent of its work force, over the past academic year. Most of the reductions in non-

Continued on page 11

## Educational Standards in the Spotlight

### Knowles' Quality School Initiative receives high marks

By Gov. Tony Knowles

Here's what happens when schools are doing their job: Fourth-graders at Anchorage's Fairview Elementary School, who in the past struggled at the bottom of national achievement rankings, jumped to better than 60 percent of students nationally in reading. Their accomplishments come after hard work inspired by a supportive principal, teachers, parents and community volunteers.

Here's what happens when schools aren't doing their job: A young college student returns to Alaska and tells the state Education commissioner that, even though she was valedictorian of her rural high school class, she had to take remedial college classes to keep up with her peers. "The school system in Alaska lied to me," she said.

Both examples are true and the point is simple. Alaska schools know how to do it right, but sometimes they don't. There is considerable education excellence across Alaska, but also signs of trouble. Alaskans want to believe in our public school system, but aren't always sure their children are getting the quality education they deserve.

Without the basics as a solid foundation, young Alaskans will be ill-prepared for the challenges of the rapidly changing global economy.

That's why I have introduced a school reform plan to renew Alaskans' confidence in their schools. The plan is a continuation of our Quality Schools Initiative - and the result of hard work by the state Board of Education, teachers, parents, superintendents, principals, local school boards, business leaders and other Alaskans who attended education summits around the state.

It's built on three fundamentals: mandatory standards in reading, writing, and math; frequent and meaningful testing so we can identify which students need help and make sure they get it; and consequences for low-performing schools.

## UAS Education professor issues call to break the mold

By Scott Christian

In writing this response to the governor's press release about educational standards in Alaska, which was sent out on Oct. 10, as a parent of two young children in Alaskan schools, as a former classroom teacher in two Alaskan districts for 12 years, and currently as a faculty member at the University of Alaska Southeast.

Before looking at the issues presented in the press release, I think it's important to consider why this radical initiative has been launched. There is a sad reality in both rural and urban systems that many students are leaving public education without the skills to succeed in society. Although schools and districts can apply for a waiver of the Carnegie unit, which assigns credit largely based on seat time, only one district in the state has applied for such a waiver. It is possible in most schools throughout the state for students to graduate after earning mainly Ds, which suggests that they have not mastered the content of their courses. This first problem, of credit assigned for seat time, is only aggravated by a grading system which is not linked directly to student performance. As, Bs and Cs are awarded based largely on the percentage of points earned during the course of a quarter or semester. In most classrooms there are rarely opportunities where students have to apply their skills and knowledge in complex real world situations, where they are evaluated by clear and rigorous criteria. The result is that students can earn high grades without synthesizing and applying their learning, and likewise, slide through the system with minimal effort. As educators, we cannot continue to deny that our system is failing our students and that fundamental change is needed.

For too long the educational community has resisted any kind of accountability for schools, teachers or students. There are outstanding schools and teachers across the state,

but for every student who leaves our system prepared for the future, there are many who move on without even a basic knowledge of their potential to be productive members of society. It's time that everyone, educators, parents, administrators and communities acknowledge the fact that our high schools are locked into an outdated, dysfunctional system based on a factory model of education.

It's time that everyone, educators, parents, administrators and communities acknowledge the fact that our high schools are locked into an outdated, dysfunctional system based on a factory model of education.

These standards and assessment tools aren't being developed in isolation. We are counting on the support and advice of all Alaskans. Education Commissioner Shirley Holloway is asking a broad cross-section of people to work out details on such issues as making standards and tests important and relevant, defining schools, and planning

methods for intervention when schools are in crisis.

Under our plan, students must be competent readers by fourth grade, competent writers by seventh and competent in algebra by eighth. These accomplishments will prepare students for the high school exit exam.

We'll assess each student's skills as they enter the system, followed by frequent tests throughout their school careers.

Based on student test scores and many other measurements, every school in Alaska will be classified by the Department of Education into one of four categories: distinguished, successful, in decline, or in crisis.

If your child's school falls into the latter two categories, the state will move in. The Department of Education will appoint "Distinguished Educators" to work with parents, families and others in the community to improve low-performing schools with programs like summer school, tutoring and night classes.

Then, if there has been no progress, the consequences

## UAS Education professor issues call to break the mold

curriculum committees in developing local curriculums based on these standards. Unfortunately, despite this first step, the standards movement in Alaska lost momentum, largely because of a lack of financial support. Regardless of the rhetoric from the legislature, it is impossible to affect meaningful change in a system as complex and diverse as Alaska's school system without the resources to bring people together to process the ideas and to make plans for implementation. Just this past year, groups of teachers have begun to write performance standards based on the Alaska Content Standards.

These statements describe what students should be able to do, how well they should be able to do it, and most importantly when it should happen. Performance standards describe the specific proficiencies at the benchmark levels (ages 8-10, 11-14 and 15-18). If we think of these performance standards as a way for students, parents and teachers to share a common language, and to focus on high, clear expectations for learning, the result should be higher achievement. The fact that the governor's plan is based on standards and performance assessment is a good thing for Alaskan schools.

Do Standards mean standardization?

This is one of the misconceptions that riles educators and administrators. Committed, independent and creative Alaskan educators don't like the idea of anyone, let alone the Department of Education (DOE), telling them what should happen in their schools. Standards actually increase the amount of in-

structional freedom for teachers, schools and districts. Once there is a clear vision for what students should know, and be able to do, there are infinite pathways, based on local resources and cultural perspectives for schools and classrooms to get there.

Should the state standards be mandatory or voluntary?

The performance standards which are now in development by groups of teachers and administrators from around the state will become the basis for the statewide assessments in reading, writing and math. Although it is the intention of the department to write performance standards and to create model performance assessments for all areas, these documents are designed to serve as models for districts to implement in ways that are culturally and locally relevant.

Yes, I think the state content standards should be mandatory.

I think schools and districts have an obligation to communicate to all stakeholders what should be happening in schools. With mandatory content standards, districts will be required to create performance standards and assessments based on the state content standards. I see this as a very positive process for schools and communities.

I have reservations about the governor's proposal. Alaska needs to learn from reform efforts that have been taking place around the country.

Lesson number one: exit exams have no impact on student achievement. Because of legal battles which inevitably occur as soon as students fail an exit exam, these tests quickly become meaningless minimum competency tests which have no impact on learning and achievement. With or without an exit exam it is up to local school boards and school districts to develop graduation requirements which go beyond these minimum com-

For more information about the Knowles Education Plan contact the State Department of Education at 465-2800.

## UA budget cutbacks continue to chill out university system

By Peter Schmidt  
Chronicle of Higher Education

The professors of the University of Alaska System tend to be hardy souls. They endure winters that arrive one month into the fall semester and last through commencement, in early May. They are accustomed to living amid vast stretches of nowhere, and flying for hours just to meet colleagues in their field. Even in Anchorage on the university system's most urban campus, they've learned to accept occasional encounters with irritable moose as part of the routine.

Lately, however, Alaska's political climate has many public-college faculty members feeling worried and worn out. Years of watching the state freeze, or chip away at, the university system's budget have gotten to them in ways that dark Decembers and cabin fever never have.

"A lot of people are disgusted, demoralized, and give up on anything better at the university," says Dave Dau, president of the union representing the state system's two-year college faculty members. The union lost about 10 percent of its members to early retirement last year.

Faculty members "are starting to wonder if this is the place where they want to make a commitment for their entire professional career," says UAS Chancellor Marshall Lind.

Many of Alaska's state officials and higher education leaders share the view that the 13-campus system's financial woes have been brought on not by a lack of resources, but by a lack of will.

The question is: Whose will is lacking?

While university officials fault the state's lawmakers and citizens for not choosing to put more money into

the system, lawmakers contend that the system wastes much of its money on excessive administrative costs — and many of the university's own students and faculty members agree.

Even as the system's Board of Regents met last month to plan for new rounds of budget cuts, the state announced that it would soon be sending every Alaskan, regardless of age, a check for \$1,296.54.

The state's residents get a check every year from the Alaskan Permanent Fund, an account that voters established in 1976 as a way to invest, and benefit from, the state government's oil revenues. The account is now worth about \$22.1 billion, and in the past fiscal year, its investment yielded a gain of about \$2.1 billion, nearly as much as the revenues of Alaska's oil industry. In some poor, rural areas, the Native Alaskans who subsist on hunting and fishing rely on the fund for a big chunk of their yearly income. Others count on the annual windfall to pay for travel, down payments on cars, or Christmas gifts.

Some university leaders have called on the state to tap into the permanent fund — or at least its profits — to help pay for higher education. But no one in the legislature has given the idea serious consideration, if only because advocating it is seen as political suicide.

"Unfortunately, we now have a situation where we have an entire generation of people who feel they have a right to this check every year for doing nothing but drawing air," says Wendy Redman, the system's vice-president for university relations.

The state's largess toward its residents is not limited to annual checks. It charges no sales or personal income taxes, deriving its revenues mainly from corporate income taxes and from the taxes and royalties it

Continued on page 14



# Math standards spark fiery debate

## Concerns multiply as professors, school board and public divide

by Eileen Wagner  
Whalesong Reporter

The Juneau School District is considering adopting a new set of math standards for grades K-12 and everyone from parents to professors has an opinion. Presently, the greatest enrollment of incoming students at UAS is in the equivalent of high school Algebra 1, and professors have an interest in raising student achievement. They praise the standards for the level of understanding demanded of students. However, parents of children in the school district look at the way math is being taught and get a sinking feeling that anything goes, that right answers don't matter any more. The standards have sparked a debate which goes to the heart of education.

UAS mathematics Professor Vesna Kilibarda has a distinct point of view on the subject of mathematics education. A native of Yugoslavia, she was trained at the University of Belgrade. She has lived in the United States for nine years, and received her master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Nebraska. She is also the parent of two children in the Juneau schools, her children are in eighth and 10th grade.

At a recent school board meeting, Professor Kilibarda urged the Juneau School Board to adopt the new standards. She said that she believes "the new standards will raise expectations from students and will raise expectations from teachers, so eventually we will raise the level of the average student. There may be an initial drop in scores, but I think eventually students will respond positively to this change. The intent of the standards is to connect mathematics to real-world applications, and to incorporate technology."

However, she added, "There is no unified view in the

mathematical community on the new standards - many are criticizing them, many are defending them. There is no unified philosophy on how to teach mathematics. I think the standards are pretty good, but it is not clear how they will be taught."

Professor Kilibarda makes a distinction between the standards and their implementation. She said some people have developed negative views of the standards from experience with untrained teachers. "Our two main goals now must be to offer teacher inservice and address the preparation of future teachers. Training is a key issue," she said.

Critics of the new standards say they fear that teachers will be given license to not teach math. If a teacher is not confident in the area of math, he or she may emphasize the discovery element, or the communication element, and allow students to propose just about any answer, and it will be accepted. Teachers may become facilitators and do little direct teaching. Opponents say the new standards do not build a firm base of computational skill, that they require students to do less work, and that they advocate the attitude "the right answer isn't important, it's how you communicate your ideas." Parents who feel their children aren't getting a strong foundation in math cry "back to basics!"

Supporters of the standards say that mathematical reasoning and conceptual ability are developed by the way students work to solve problems using their intuitive insights, rather than learning algorithms and doing endless drill work. They contend that students will develop solutions by immersing themselves in mathematical problems, and discussing them as a group.

UAS math Professor Ron Seater says that there's an

acceptance of math illiteracy that is not serving us well as we approach the next century: "You'd never see anyone get up, beating their breast and saying they can't read, but that's what they do about math, and they seem proud of it." Seater said the new system will benefit average and below-average students the most. "If we create an expectation that is higher, but achievable, students will reach it. But for the first few years, we need to offer a safety net for those who can't reach the goal," he said. Seater also emphasizes that teacher training will make or break the reform effort.

Some parents are concerned about the other end of the spectrum - their children who remain unchallenged in Integrated Math, which is the new way Algebra and Geometry are being taught as a combined course at the Juneau-Douglas High School.

Gaye Willis, a parent of four children in the district, has enrolled her tenth-grade son in Algebra through correspondence after studying the difference between the old and new textbooks. She says the texts are more interested in being politically correct (numerous pictures of people in wheelchairs) than teaching math.

"I think they're experimenting," she said, "and I'm not willing to let him be a guinea pig." While mathematicians say that Integrated Math is fine if it is covered thoroughly, the class has finished only one chapter in the first quarter of school.

Professor Kilibarda had to admit that her daughter's class had only finished one chapter also. When asked if her daughter was challenged in Integrated Math, Kilibarda paused for a long moment. Finally, she said "I think they can challenge them more. I believe we can challenge students much more than we are doing at this time. But we have to start somewhere."

# Outdoor Recreation Center Board discusses future

By Heather Montez  
Whalesong Reporter

Outdoor Recreation Center (ORC) Board members are hoping to clear up rumors and answer concerns that seem to be circulating within the general student body in regards to their future plans. At the Nov. 5 meeting, board members along with Chancellor Marshall Lind and other faculty members, discussed future plans for the center and possible sites for a new facility that would house the growing needs of the center.

The Outdoor Center is a newly formed organization that was proposed and passed by the student government at the end of Spring semester 1997. The idea for the center was to provide various outdoor rental equipment and services for a nominal fee to students. A board was elected to oversee the center and act as to represent the student body. Faculty members who had knowledge of, and were involved with outdoor activities became involved to assist in the business and risk management side of things.

In May, a bill was passed sponsored by then UAS Student Body President Shawn Paul allocating \$3,000 as start-up funds for the Outdoor Recreation Center. This initial money went for repairing and replacing equipment that the university already owned had had been using for years. Safety equipment was purchased along with hiking guides and other odds and ends that were needed to get the equipment into shape and start-up the center. The student government's intention was and still is to act as an umbrella for the ORC until it gets rolling and is able to operate on its own. The target date being in the year 2000.

At the center's inception, storage space for equipment had been minimal. In its new location, their current area in the bottom of the Maurant Building, it has been feasible for some expansion. Students were given questionnaires to fill out

giving board members an idea of students interest and equipment they would like to have offered. These results were looked at to decide what equipment students wanted. Based on the student information and what would be feasible to store in the current storage area, equipment has been looked at and some is currently being purchased. Camping equipment, roller blades, ice skates and snowshoes were among the top items.

The current problem is their small room in the Mourant Building along with an area behind the Hendricksen Annex which store kayaks and one canoe are becoming smaller and smaller to the growing need of equipment being requested. Plans are being looked at for a structure that will allow the Center to expand even more and ensure the upkeep of the equipment. "We're looking for a building that would accommodate growth, but also that would accommodate an area where things could be cleaned," said Dave Kleinpeter, board administrative assistant.

"Currently equipment comes back dirty and right now it has to go back out the way it came in because there is no place to clean it." Kleinpeter said that the board is envisioning something with a large roll-up door for easy distribution of larger equipment. A large sink/bathtub, hose and drain is also needed for easier cleaning and upkeep of the equipment along with an area for a small office.

Chancellor Lind and the Alumni Association have been behind the center and the new building project 100 percent. At the Nov. 5 meeting Lind said, "We are willing to support anything that will enhance the opportunities for students to realize the outdoors." He added, "that's one of the reasons students come here and it's one of things we like to promote." He said he realizes the need for a storage facility for this group is growing right along with the increase in student enrollment.

Associate Dean Gary Bowen was also

at the meeting. He has been involved and was interested in involving the Technology Construction class in the construction of the structure. By incorporating the class, the cost would only be the materials, which have been estimated at around \$5,000.

But the problem that the center has run into is the limitations in terms of suitable space around the campus. The area between Soboleff and Hendrickson Annex, near where the new kiln is, was considered and then later rejected because there wasn't enough space to build much of a structure without it complicating the snow plow removal in that area.

A floating structure was also looked at, something that could be part of the dock. This was also rejected after discussion determined that trying to build on the lake may turn out to be difficult because of codes for building near the lake and possible objections from environmental groups and residents around the lake area.

## Second Project Studied

As the UAS architects looked at the project of designing such a facility, Chancellor Lind looked at the designs for the proposed Recreational Center/Gym. The Gym is a large building that has been proposed by the university for a few years now. The surveyed area for the building is on the left hand side of Egan Library looking out toward the lake. This building is being designed as a large multi-use gym that would include things such as a hanging suspension track, full basketball court, show-ers, rooms for aerobics or instructional classes, and a climbing wall.

After looking at the design, Lind's suggestion was for the ORC to build something temporary on the proposed gym site. He said when the Recreational Center/Gym is built, the ORC structure could be moved and attached to the gym.

This would concentrate outdoor recreation, rental, gym all in one spot. The current dock, which is not a permanent dock, could be moved down the lake near the shoreline and placed in front of the recreation center and a trail could be constructed from the center to the lake.

Chancellor Lind said he doesn't have an exact answer to when the university hopes to see the gym built. His goal now is to assess the costs of building the recreational facility and once the university has the figures they can go about figuring out how to pay for it.

"We know we are not going to get the money from the legislature, were going to have to borrow it," Lind said. The Board of Regents support the gym and they have approved the plan, but getting money from the legislative, with all the current budget cuts is next to impossible. "It's something we are going to have to take on ourselves," Lind said. He is hopeful that the gym will be built in the near future. "Its possible depending on the cost and the support we get from several entities, we could be building this facility within the year." Lind said, "I'm optimistic that a package can be put together."

The ORC Board has not made a final decision on what they want to do in terms of expansion.

Do they wait for the Recreational Center/Gym to be built and in the meantime try to maximize their current space by buying equipment that will fit in the current location and hope the plans for the Recreational Center/Gym will come through?

Or, do they want to use money and the students of the Marine Technology class to build a temporary structure that may need to be moved at a later date?

Which option they decide on will be discussed at a later meeting when more concrete information becomes available on the proposed Recreational Center/Gym.

**Who?** will make a statement next?

Cashback Bonus\* award\*

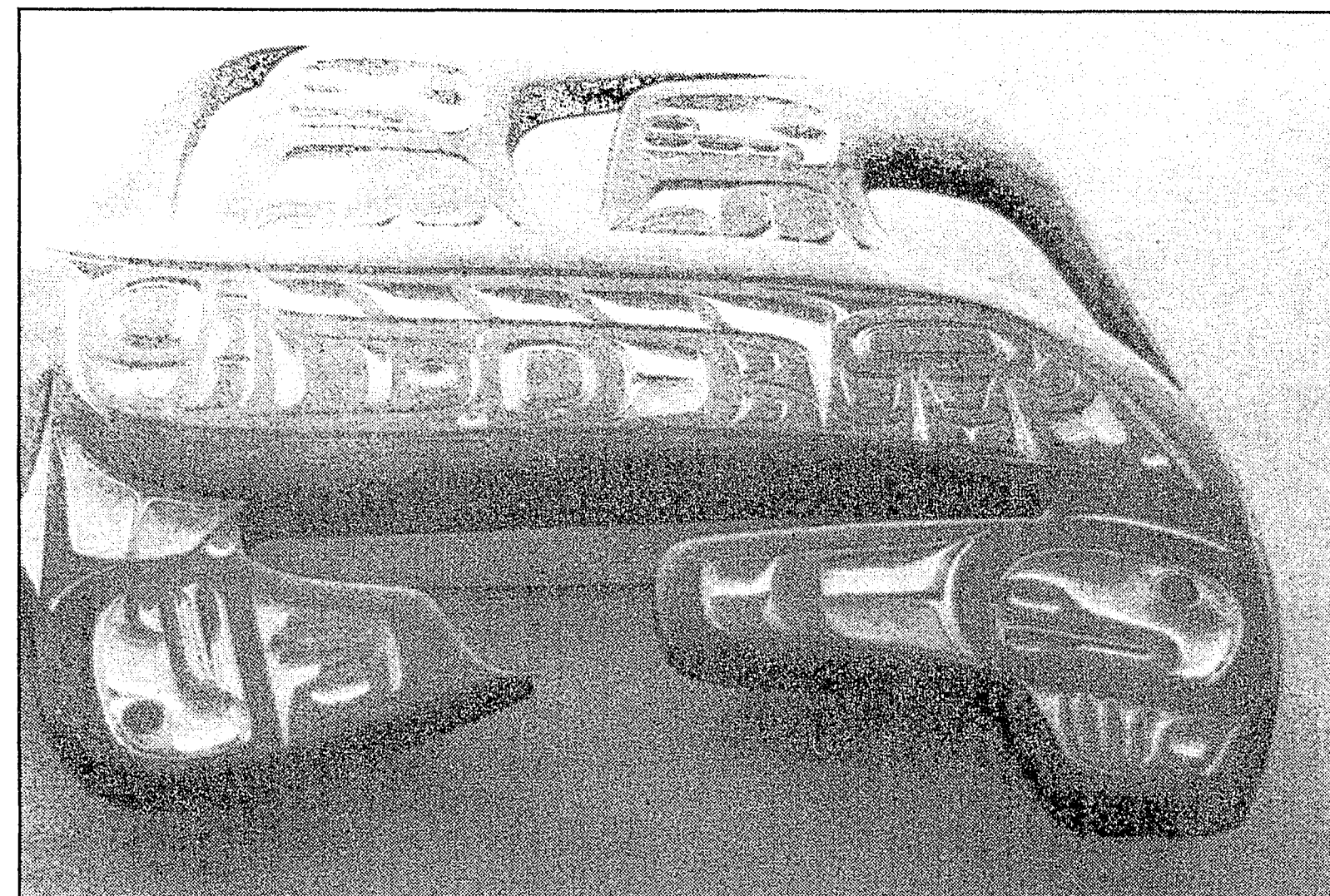
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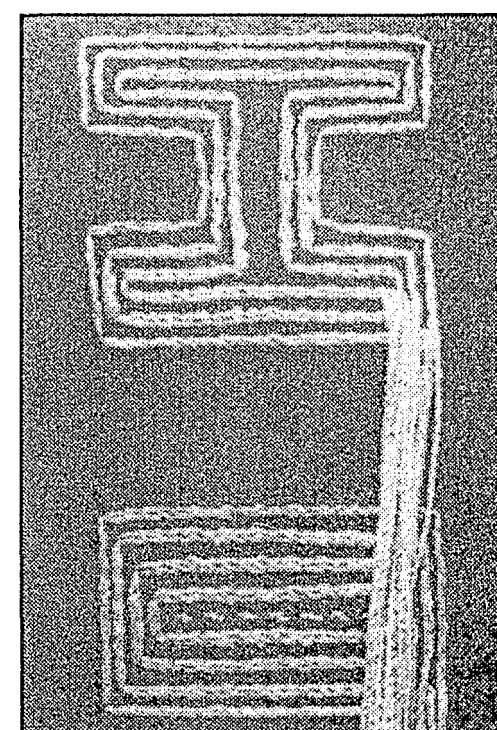
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A section of the Eagle Shark Panel, left, made of yellow cedar and painted with acrylic. Below, detail showing the patten and tassels of the Midwinter Ravenstail Robe.



## Not just books

### Native Art Enhances the University's Egan Library

A careful chip of the chisel, a delicate twist of spruce root, or a deliberate bending of cedar. These simple actions, when combined with inspiration and a lot of patience, can eventually create items of art and function.

The cliché is that you shouldn't miss the forest for the trees, but sometimes the individual trees themselves are worth examining in detail.

Even to the uneducated eye, a closer inspection of each piece of Native artwork in the university's Egan Library can reveal clues about the traditions and styles followed, the materials utilized, or the tools

used in their creation. Some of the pieces were intended to serve a functional or ceremonial purpose, while others were crafted to tell a story.

Each individual item, in turn, is merely a part of a large single collection; a diverse selection of Native artwork that was installed when the library was completed in 1990.

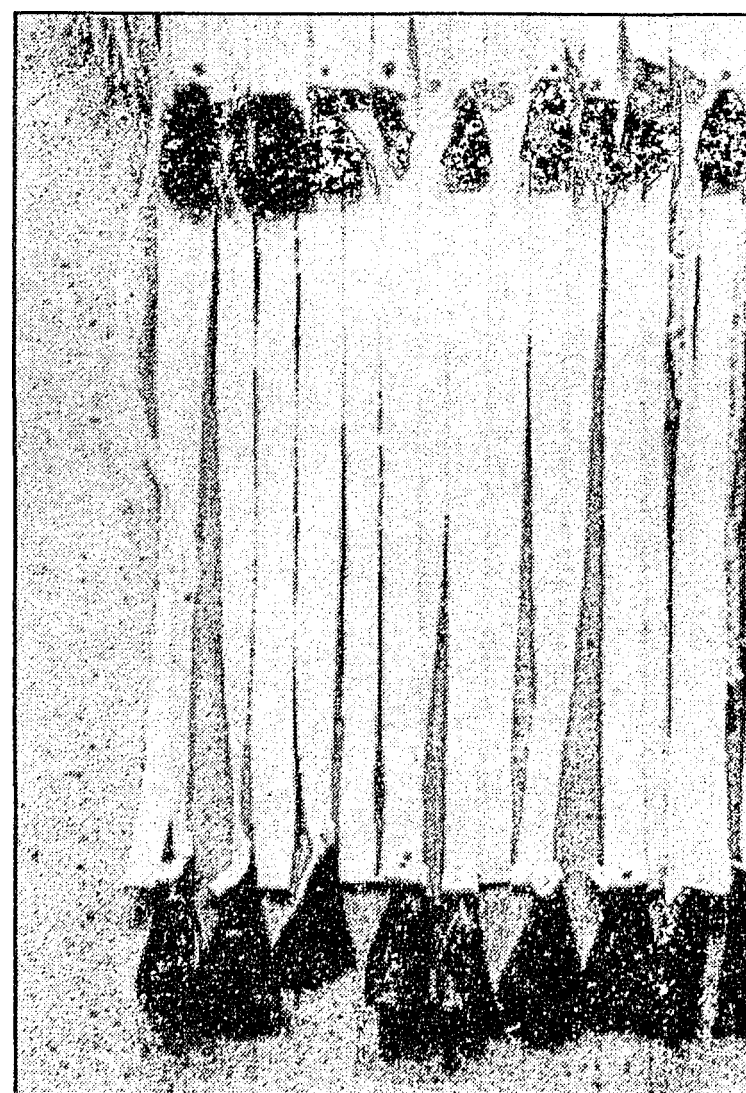
As part of the Alaska Percent for Art program, over \$72,000 was set aside to purchase 22 separate items that are representative of the Native art and culture of Southeast Alaska.

Many of the smaller pieces are on display in a glass case on the ground floor,

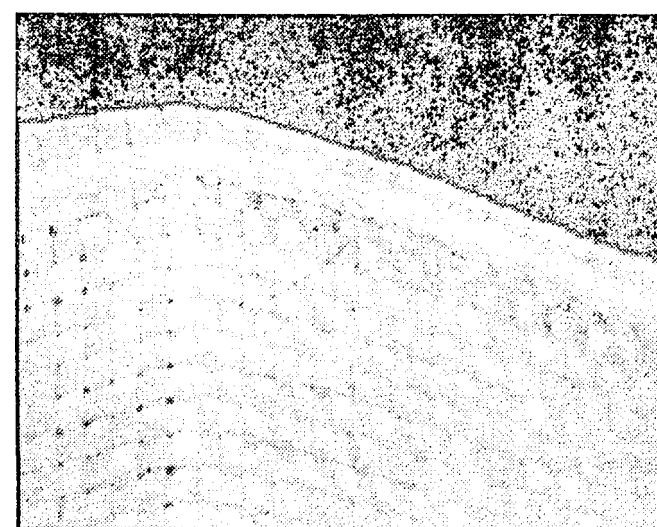
while others are in various locations on the entrance level. The final and largest piece, is the Haa Shagoon Gaas'ee Totem Pole, a 38-foot piece of carved red cedar, that was donated and erected four years ago opposite the Whitehead Building.

The commissions awarded for the artwork amounted to less than three-quarters of one-percent of the entire \$10 million cost of the library.

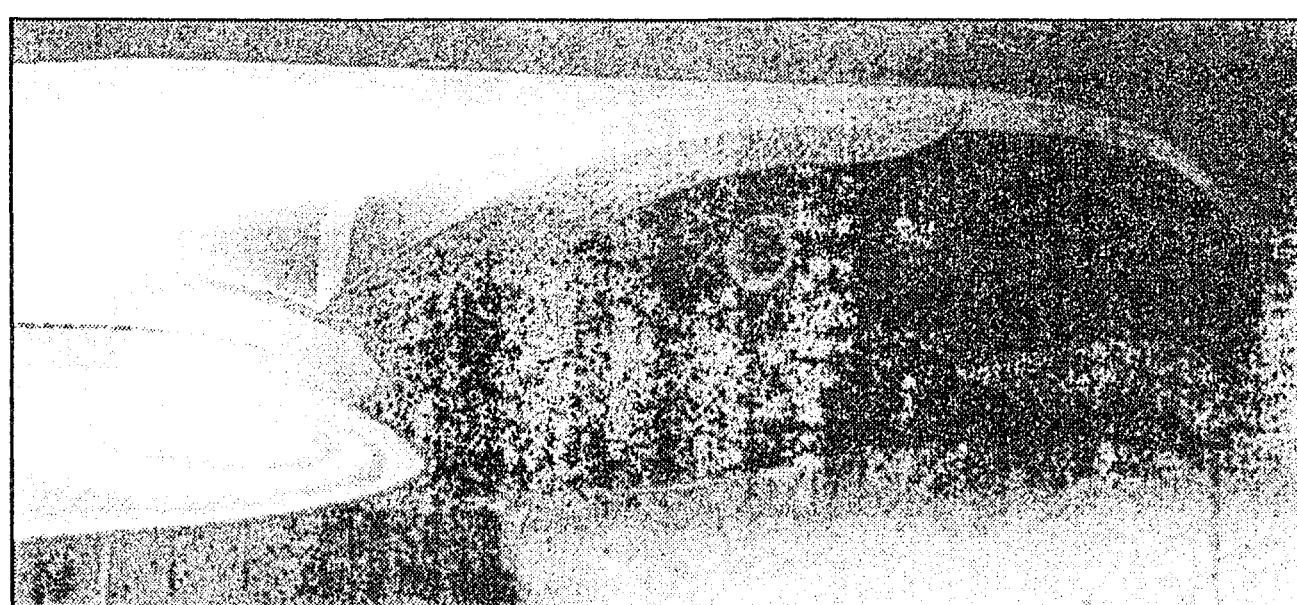
But the expense goes a long way toward adding some cultural style and warmth to what might otherwise be perceived as a fairly austere wood and concrete building that simply shelters books.



Deer hooves are used along with fur and merino wool in the fringe of this Ravenstail Apron.



Red cedar bark is intricately woven into a Plaited Utility Basket at left. An updated version of a Raven Headdress, bottom, is made of cedar and bark.

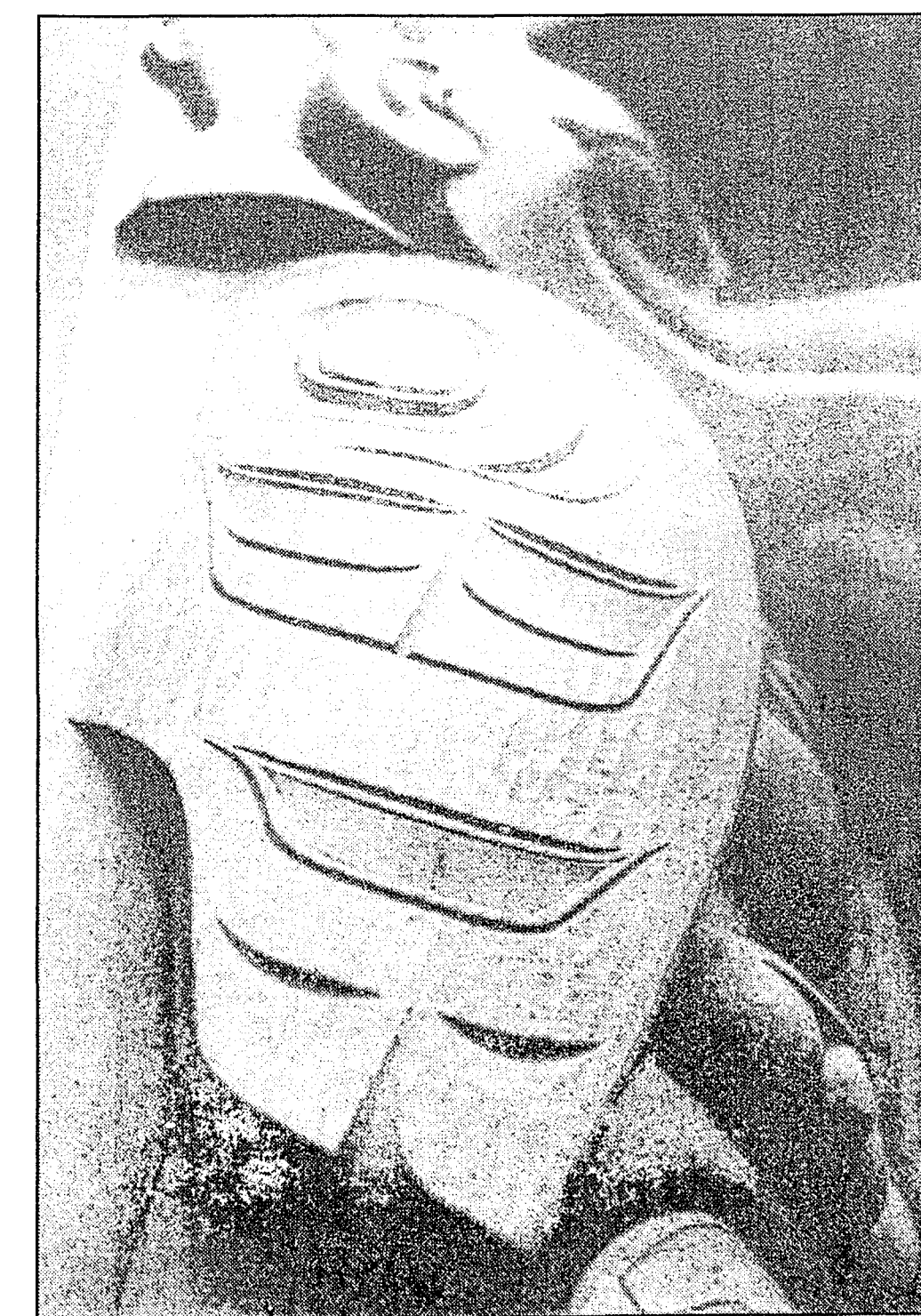
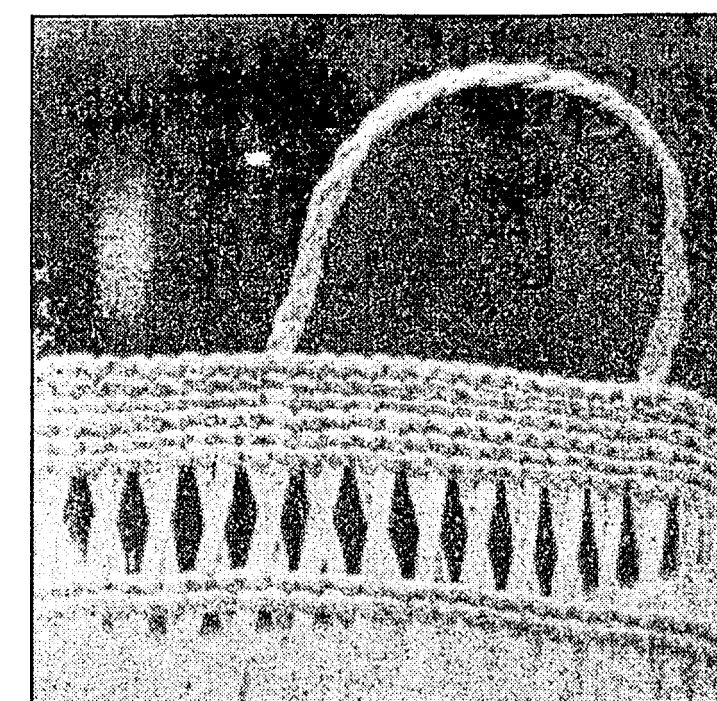


One of the many characters carved into the Aak'w Eagle House Post located at the right of the main staircase.

### Photographs and Text by Matt Miller



An untraditional material, cedar bark paper, is used to create the Tlingit mask shown at right. Below, spruce roots were weaved together to create this Open Weave Clam Basket.



Detail of the second Aak'w House Post that features the story of how Raven stole the sun and carried it into the sky.



## Environmental Science offers students strong science foundation

By Eileen Wagner  
Whalesong Reporter



Assistant Professor of Geology Cathy Connor points out some glacial features to students during a field trip.

The first thing that strikes you when you look at the Environmental Science degree requirements is how many science classes are required. The designers of the program, UAS Professors Cathy Connor and Randy Stahl, solicited input from the community, from local and federal agencies, to help direct the outcome of the program. What they heard was that employers wanted people trained in science and math.

## Banfield Residence Hall honors memory of longtime university supporter

By Heather Montez  
Whalesong Reporter



Banfield Hall, the newly dedicated residence hall, named after one of the university's great supporters, Mildred H. Banfield, has been initiated with greatness behind its name.

Juneau resident Mike Miller, who served with Banfield in the Alaska House of Representatives, asked the audience at the Sept. 6 dedication, "Banfield Hall—doesn't that have a ring to it? I can imagine a Banfield Hall in Harvard, Stanford. I think it sounds great. It rings with dignity, with substance, and integrity. You know

"We could offer the community more by training scientists than by working the policies and the issues," said Connor. They decided that students would be better prepared for employment opportunities with a strong science background, rather than an environmental studies course.

Connor admits to being the prime mover behind the program. "It's natural for a geologist to be a prime mover in this area because geologists are trained to think in systems," she said. "We see change through time; we know that climate and different geologic forces have been responsible for extinctions of species and natural disasters, for why geopolitics is the way it is. Geography is more of a natural bridge between science and social science, but it is logical for an earth person to do this."

She said the idea for the program came to her as soon as she moved to Juneau and that all she did was re-package existing science classes. She credited the UAS administration with giving her complete support from the beginning. "It was astonishing. The Board of Regents hadn't approved a new degree program for 10 years, but they saw how compelling our argument was. Juneau is just the right place to be doing this sort of thing, with easy access to so many field sites," she said.

A big part of the degree program will be internships with working scientists. "There's a tremendous wealth of expertise in Juneau," said Connor, and one of the program's many drawing points is the fine mentors in the community. The U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Coast Guard are three of the agencies where students will intern. Some students will be working on a stream monitoring project this spring near the Mendenhall Lake and collect baseline data for possible future development.

The Icefield Research program, though not a requirement for Environmental Science majors, is a rich opportunity for students to work with faculty and other students from different parts of the country who have been engaged in research all over the world.

One major requirement of the degree is the development of a writing portfolio, which includes a lab journal, field notes, and papers in various discipline areas. Chemistry Professor Stahl underlined the importance of both written and verbal communication skills for scientists. "Two things we have a

responsibility to do in higher education that we don't always do well, and that is to help students write well and speak well," he said.

Stahl also talked about the humanities component of the environmental science degree. "People who are practitioners of science often have a difficult time making effective inputs on public policy. We need to train students not only to be technically proficient, but to understand how to interact and present the information, how to be sensitive and culturally aware, how to communicate science to the public," he said.

It seems that possibly the strongest part of this program is its core faculty. Both Connor and Stahl are committed to offering a rewarding program to undergraduates. Connor said, "I'm not apologetic about making it rigorous. Otherwise we'd be doing a disservice to Juneau and to the university as well. Too much talent is being wasted. It's too easy for students to live up to poor expectations. But if you really challenge them, it's amazing what they'll do. College is all about maturing and growing and really stretching yourself."

Stahl added, "What you see in science is a whole spectrum of people, but something caught their fancy and it captivated their imagination, so they decided to pursue more training in that field to understand it. Somebody has to pay attention to you at a very formative stage in your life if you want to be a scientist, somebody has to take an interest and say 'hey, this is important—I'm glad you have an interest,' and encourage that. I certainly had people do that for me."

The degree program officially starts next fall, when the first group of entering freshmen matriculate. Currently there are two declared environmental science majors on campus, although a group of 10 students turned out for a recent meeting about the program. The environmental studies program is expected to be a very popular major and can accommodate an influx of students, particularly in the introductory classes. Because of strong community support for the program, Connor and Stahl feel extra part-time staff would be available if needed.

For those students who would like additional information about this program you can contact either Connor or Stahl or check out the upcoming course catalog for a complete listing of environmental science classes.

She isn't here to see her legacy, but Banfield Hall stands as a symbol of what she wanted for Juneau and the university.

The dedication program sums it up. It reads: "The construction of the student residence hall helped solidify the University of Alaska community with the addition of more than 80 full-time, on-campus students. The dedication of this building brings a spirit to the structure, Mildred Banfield was a strong supporter of the entire University of Alaska system and the Juneau campus. From this date forward, Banfield Hall will be a reminder of excellence in higher education."

Longtime friend and current Juneau Regent Elsa Demeska, described Banfield as somewhat of a feminist. Although, she said, Banfield would never have considered herself one. Demeska said, "Millie was a leader in the days when it was uncommon to have female leaders." Demeska remembered a time when Banfield found out the Baranof Hotel had a male only gym. "She hit the roof," said Demeska. Banfield challenged the Baranof's men-only policy and convinced them to change the policy to accommodate women.

Banfield, known as

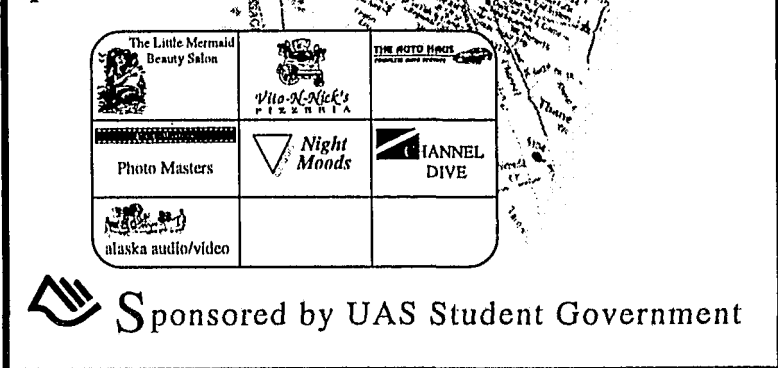
"Millie" to friends, was born in Fremont, Nebraska. She studied business at Midland College and the University of Chicago. She came to Alaska in 1946, married Norman Banfield in 1951 and had two children, Nancy and Julie. She was active in Juneau civic affairs and was named Woman of the Year by Rotary in 1966.

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## Cutbacks...

Continued from page 4

teaching personnel came in the form of layoffs. Six faculty members also were laid off, and 36 others took advantage of a retirement incentive program, even though the severance packages it offered were widely regarded by faculty members as stingy. Because the system was unable to select which faculty members could take early retirement, the program had the effect of decimating some academic program while leaving others untouched.

The campus at UAA was especially hard hit by the retrenchment. Anchorage lost about 20 faculty positions to early retirement and layoffs, and had to eliminate about 130 out of about 2,700 four-credit course selections. "We are starting to see enrollment declines that are directly attributable to offering fewer courses," says Chancellor Edward Lee Gorsuch.

The state already had seen a much larger proportion of its young people go elsewhere for college than most other states do. "People who grow up here don't aspire to go here. This is, to them, the final choice," says William K. Wolfrum, editor of UAA's student newspaper, The Northern Light.

This year, even though few of the system's departed professors have been replaced, administrators say they have little choice but to offer another round of retirement incentives. By fall 1999, the system expects to have cut its total work force by nearly 18 percent, including a 17 percent reduction among faculty members. The projected reductions range

from about 15 percent of administrators and other professional personnel to about 32 percent.

Neither Gov. Tony Knowles nor the Republicans who dominate the legislature have expressed any support for a substantial increase in the state's appropriation for the university system.

In fact, many Republicans campaigned two years ago on a pledge to trim \$250 million in state spending over a five-year period that began in fiscal year 1997. Their leaders have pointed the budget knives at the university system, which has sustained much smaller budget cuts than other public agencies, and which the Republicans accuse of being slow to heed their demands to rid itself of waste.

"They only listen to us when they come to get general funds, and the rest of the time it is all smoke and mirrors," says Sen. Robin Taylor (R-Wrangell), who holds key positions on several legislative committees.

UA President Jerome Komisar says its administrative costs are about 20 percent higher than those of systems in other sparsely populated Western states. But some higher costs are inevitable, he says, given the unusual mission of the Alaska system, which provides its 32,000 students with everything from adult basic education to graduate programs, and which serve an area almost a fifth the size of the rest of the United States. Several campuses are accessible only by boat or plane.

Some of the system's own faculty and student leaders contend, however,

that the administration underestimates, and cannot justify, its costs. "Most faculty think the administration is just way too large, way too cumbersome," says F. Gerald Plumely, an associate professor of marine science on the Fairbanks campus.

"They cut faculty, they cut staff, they cut programs, they cut classes, but they don't train the gun on themselves," says Dr. Dau of the Alaska Community College Federation of Teachers.

At the behest of the legislature, the regents are planning to reorganize the system's administration, with the goal of saving \$16 million over the next three years. They intend to save \$6 million by increasing administrative productivity, \$4 million by cutting the budgets of rural campuses, and \$6 million by reducing administrative expenses at the system's central office in Fairbanks and on its main campuses in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau.

In their effort to shift responsibilities and resources among the campuses, the regents are having to negotiate long-standing rivalries among the three main campuses and between urban campuses and the system's remote sites.

"There is a lot of uneasiness that the hidden intent of the legislature is to eliminate the smaller campuses because they are not cost efficient," says Kevin Tritt, president of the study government at UAA.

The regents have given assurances that they will not take aim at smaller cam-

puses, and some lawmakers from rural areas have vowed to fight any effort by the Anchorage-dominated legislature to demand such change.

However, when the regents met in Fairbanks last month, Michael Kelly, the board's president, told them that the \$16 million in savings expected from the reorganization effort was "still not going to be enough to keep the university system's budget balanced." The point is mainly to show their sincerity about cutting waste.

He and other university officials said the system's long-term health depends on its ability to convince Alaskans that by spending more on their public colleges, they will make their state more attractive to businesses and industries, especially those involved with trade with Russia and other countries of the Pacific Rim.

By investing in its public colleges, the system's leaders argue, the state will ensure itself a much better economic future than it will have by depending on oil pumped from the ground.

This article appeared in the Oct. 31 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education. Reprinted with permission.

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## Perseverance brings Christmas to Juneau a little early this year

"King Island Christmas," the second play in Perseverance Theater's fall season, is billed as "a fantasy come to life!"

Former Juneau playwright Deborah Baley Brevoort and Disney composer David Friedman have teamed up to bring Juneau author Jean Rogers' magical book, "King Island Christmas," to the stage for the first time.

This world premiere musical oratorio is directed by Anita Maynard-Losh, with musical direction by Sally Smith (both longtime Juneau theater members).

The story begins on Christmas Eve, with the King Islanders facing the challenge of saving their priest who is stranded aboard the North Star freighter. In the tradition of musical oratorio, actors and singers portray the forces of nature, an oomiah and a multitude of characters celebrate the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity.

According to Brevoort the idea for the oratorio began nearly seven years ago. She said, "I mentioned to Jean that 'King Island Christmas' would make a good musical because every time I read it, it just sang." She added, "The day I left Alaska (for the East Coast) Jean showed up at Perseverance Theater with a copy of her wonderful book. She asked me to keep it and to think about turning it into that musical someday. Finally, after several false starts, David and I began."

Brevoort called writing "King Island Christmas" one of the most pleasurable experiences she has had as a writer. The collaboration of Brevoort and Friedman won the two the Frederick Loewe Award, which salutes a promising new American musical.

Brevoort's last work to premiere at Perseverance was "Coyote Goes Salmon Fishing," which has since been optioned for a Broadway production. Friedman is a New York based composer-conductor, known for his vocal arrangements on Disney films, including "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," "Hunchback of Notre Dame," and "Pocahontas."

Brevoort and Friedman are in Juneau for rehears-

als and the opening night of the show.

Traditional oratorios are generally sung by church choirs with soloists who narrate the narrative sections and stand in for different characters in the dramatic sections. "King Island Christmas" is structured in this manner, but with one difference. Instead of being sung by a church choir, it is performed by a group of Christmas carolers who have come to the theater to sing the story.

The designs of well-known Juneau artist Rie Munoz, who illustrated the book also, are the backdrop for the play.

The play is funded in part by the National Bank of Alaska, the architectural firm of Jensen, Yorba, Lott, Inc., and the law firm of Faulkner, Banfield, Doogan and Holmes.

The oratorio opens, Friday, Nov. 21 and runs through Dec. 21.

King Island Christmas is recommended for children of all ages, from 2 to 92.

For college students on a limited budget, there will be two pay-as-you-can performances. The first will be on Wednesday, Dec. 3 and the second will be on Wednesday, Dec. 10, both start at 7:30 p.m.

There will also be a free preview on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 6 p.m. On Tuesday, Nov. 18, and Thursday, Nov. 20, there will be previews for \$4 each and the show starts at 7:30 p.m. on those two nights.

Tickets are available through Hearstside Books at both their Nugget Mall and downtown locations. Tickets can also be obtained with a credit card by calling the theater at 364-2421. Ticket prices range from \$10 for children under 12 to \$20 on opening night and Saturdays. Student rates are \$13 on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, and \$18 on opening nights and Saturdays.

Regular showtimes are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 6 p.m., with the exception of the final Sunday performance on Dec. 21 at 2 p.m.

## JDLT's Newest Production Touches Your Heart

The heartache and joy of adoption and living with a disabled child is the theme of Juneau Douglas Little Theater's newest play, "Emma's Child."

"Emma's Child" is the touching and provocative story of the gifts a child born with disabilities brings to an adoptive couple's lives.

If you want to experience joy, love, hope and laughter in the face of adversity, then you will want to see this play.

Deborah Smith is directing the play. Smith is well-known to theater-goers in Juneau. She has worked in theater for over 30 years and has more than 150 productions under her belt. Smith has both acted and directed, as well as designed sets and productions for many local plays. Her most recent credits include directing the musical, "Forever Plaid," and playing the role of Dr. Livingstone in "Agnes of God," another Juneau Douglas Little Theater production.

In the Director's Notes to the play, Smith comments on the effect this play has had on her and her cast: "Our exploration of this work has increased the sensitivity of cast and crew to the joys and heartaches of commitment, adoption and living with a child who experiences disabilities. The pain and joy has come full circle with you as the audience. May you be as moved sharing this evening with us as we have been in creating it for you."

Special note should be made of one of the cast members, Cinnamon Simpson, who is also a UAS student. Two Juneau-Douglas High School students are in the play as well, Kate Becker and Melissa Davis.

Oregonian Kristin Thatcher wrote the play, which was commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and its premiere performance was held at the Black Swan Theater in Ashland on April 1, 1995.

The production is dedicated to the memory of the playwright's mother, Joyce Bishop. Bishop would have turned 80 this week, but she died on Oct. 10.

"Emma's Child," opens Friday, Nov. 7, at 8 p.m. at McPhetres Hall. The production runs each Friday and Saturday night until Nov. 22. Tickets can be purchased at either Hearstside Books location, in the Nugget Mall or downtown.



## Land bill. . .

Continued from page 1

once free and open public lands, will be subject to scenarios where hunting, fishing, and recreational uses are encumbered or brought into conflict with private extractive operations.

In addition to this opposition, 10 Southeast Alaska communities and two tribal governments have passed resolutions opposed to the lands bill.

In his testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Koehler disputed some of Murkowski's figures. First, the university owns more than the 112,000 acres it received as a land grant university. According to Koehler, if the following acres and land are taken into account, which include fee simple land, surface rights, subsurface rights, harvestable timber, and agricultural rights, it appears that the university currently holds 173,326 acres of investment property.

Second, since the Morrill Land Grants were based on population, not size, Alaska's land grant is appropriate. When gauged by population, our land grant equals 31 times that of California. When gauged by the number of UA students enrolled in the statewide system, our land grant also seems overly generous. Each student in Alaska is supported by 5 acres of land, while each California student is supported by only 1.2 acres of land.

The third point Koehler took issue with Murkowski on was the ANILCA (Alaska Native Interests Land Act) settlement. In 1980, Congress granted Alaska an additional 75,000 acres as a "full and final settlement of any and all claims by the State of Alaska arising under the Act of March 4, 1915," which referred to the Morrill Act. The ANILCA provision further states, "In exercising the selection rights granted herein, the State shall be deemed to have relinquished all claims to any right, title or interest to any school lands which failed to vest under the above statutes at the time Alaska became a State (Jan. 3, 1959), including lands unsurveyed at that date or surveyed lands which were within Federal reservations or withdrawals on that date."

Both the Alaska Statehood Act and ANILCA extinguished land entitlements for the state of Alaska.

## Bellagh. . .

Continued from page 1

At the age of 16, Bellagh traveled to Switzerland as an exchange student where he learned German, his third language. While in Switzerland he became interested in Spanish through some people he met there from Ecuador. "They were just really heartfelt, wonderful people. I always loved listening to their language and I was intrigued, so I learned it," he said.

Bellagh went to Juniata College, a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania where he studied Spanish, German, Education and Peace studies. He did his graduate work at the University of Wisconsin in Madison where he studied for two intense years in literature and linguistics, with an emphasis in Spanish.

Bellagh chose to study Spanish over other languages because he said, "I love it. It's more melodic, more musical, it flows and it just sounds so beautiful. I just love how it sounds and I am just intrigued by it."

After receiving his master's degree Bellagh became burnt out by the intense studying and decided he wanted to visit Alaska. He was interested in doing volunteer work and searched for any organization that would bring him to the state that he heard had few people and lots of mountains. He came in 1992 as a volunteer for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) and he said, "the first day I got here (Juneau) I knew that I wanted to stay."

Bellagh finished his work with SEARHC after a year and knew he would be staying so he decided since he was going to stay and he had this master's degree that he might as well try and use it. Although no positions were being advertised at the time, he put in his application at the school district and the university. As luck would have it, the UAS Spanish professor at the time found a different job and quit a week before school started.

Bellagh was hired as a visiting professor during the fall of 1993 and continued being hired from semester to semester. During spring semester 1996, he took six months off to travel to Ecuador and returned in the fall of 1996 to a full-time position. This year he applied and received the newly created full-time tenure job.

The biggest change from this year and last year is now he is director of all the foreign languages in Southeast and he has a lot more paperwork and responsibilities.

Bellagh, known for his interactive teaching style, said that people learn by doing. "You can learn from a book and you can learn by being exercises, but you won't remember it," he said, "You will not believe how many people come up to me and say I've had four years of high school Spanish and I don't remember a thing, I can't say a word."

It's because in high school they don't make the students use it in class."

Bellagh added, "That's the most important, make them use it. In class we do very little grammar, very little let's-go-over-the-worksheet-kind-of-stuff. We do active stuff. Stand up, go over there and talk to that person."

Bellagh teaches students to not be afraid of different languages, "You can't be afraid. There is no danger. The only danger is the perceived danger that we have instilled in our heads of making a mistake, and oh God, forbid you make a mistake." He added, "When you're starting to do something there's no other way to go about it. You start and make mistakes and get corrected and that's part of it. My students start to understand that after awhile. Not right away but after awhile. The ones that dare to try, learn the most."

"I continually tell them to bomb through the errors. So you said the form wrong, people will understand, and that's the most important thing is to communicate. If you communicate your idea, your successful regardless if you've got the grammar stuff right or not," Bellagh said, "Sure the grammar is important to communicate more exactly, so we go about that a piece at a time, but that isn't the important part. The important part is to be able to talk."

Bellagh uses sign language in his classes as a bridge between English and Spanish. "Instead of saying it, you show it," he said. "My students can connect meaning with the sign and I don't have to say it in English anymore, they connect."

He feels because Spanish is becoming our second language, and learning it can be a critical part of a student's education he tells his students, that "if you are willing to relocate and you know Spanish you will have first dibs in whatever career you choose. You will get picked over someone else who doesn't speak Spanish. You are the most employable person in the work field."

Because there is such a demand to learn Spanish, Bellagh would like to see the university get another Spanish teacher. Currently his class sizes are 31 and 33 students. The evening class, taught by Alison Talley, has 40. Bellagh would like to get the numbers down to a more ideal and manageable number of 24.

In the future, Bellagh hopes that the university will incorporate a sign language and German class, and he is encouraged by the possibility that someday students will be able to get a degree in language at the university.

He said he doesn't like being so far away from his family, especially his parents who he is very close to, but hopes to talk them into retiring here. "I love Juneau and I love this job. I'm going to keep doing this and I'll get better at it."

## Inside Madame Meng's Crystal Ball Astrology for the weeks of November 7-November 21

By The Dream Dragon

### Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 22)

You may be feeling exceptionally buoyant the first half of November. Be sure to use caution with that penetrating wit of yours, it could get you in a metaphysical pinch with the powers that have minor tentacles on your finances. You will turn friendly this month, making up for the way you abused everyone last month. You seem to be ready to beat the crap out everyone (and that is just the beginning). If you still have any friends left, this could be an entertaining full moon on the 14th.

### Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)

You have been snorting around with the party crowd and shirking all cares; but when Mars jumps into bed with Capricorn in November, you'll need to be out there in your business suit, sucking up and acting intelligent. You always do well with these transitions, so put that smile on high beam, and jump back into the important stuff.

### Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Your ruling planet is Saturn, the one who tells you to go to bed on time, and reports you when you cheat or are late for an appointment. That is your ruling planet. What that means, is that at times like now, when you want to actually relax with your friends, or grovel in partyland, you still have that nagging little voice (no, it is not your mother) saying, back to work, get back to work, you

really must get all of this done. Those voices could be ignored once in a while, but only at your own peril.

### Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

You have jumped into the spin cycle until February, and hopefully you are prepared for all of this intense activity. It's not your fault. Jupiter has gone direct and this throws your life into a complete rumpus room of chaos. Maintain your balance, find the middle way, and bring out that charm that you are known so well for.

### Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20)

This month that sexy Venus moves into the ultimately flirtatious Sagittarius, and you may want to let everyone know just how outrageous and kinky you truly can be. Stop being obsessed by oppressing everyone around you, you are just fine, and those who you really do oppress probably desperately need it.

### Aries (March 21-April 20)

This month the sun is in your opposite sign of Libra. You may become aware of fairness, balance, beauty, and refinement. You may be crazed by the contradictions in your psyche. You long to have a screaming affair with an inappropriate other, and yet, you seem so refined. Try both, there may be a way.

### Taurus (April 21-May 20)

Venus is crashing through the ever-so-adventuresome Sagittarius, and in your own way, you are drawing even more spacecases in your direction. Ha. You love this stuff

even though it infuriates you. Welcome them, by the end of the month you will probably have lots of visitors. Work will be trying, but if you are warmer than usual it will pay you well. Your communication skill are really going on into the upward cycle.

### Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

You are in the throes of your ruling planet (Mercury) being split by Libra and Scorpio. Convince everyone that you are crucial to their team, and charm everyone that you want on your team or you could amp out and eject yourself into a completely new phase. Not a good idea right now, as you are just beginning to build toward some important goals. Even though it may not seem like it.

### Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

You may find yourself occasionally hiding in your office, cubicle, bedroom, place of worship, spitting and hissing about your fellow workers. Usually you are so warm and loving, but this may be a trying time. Just pause and reconsider. Figure ways to disperse that anger or jealousy and that loving self will come through once again renewed and shining.

### Leo (July 23 - August 22)

You seem to be dealing with hard and narrow surfaces this month. It may not do any good to try to soften them, just try to keep silent when others express concern for the fairer things in life. It may make you want to froth and spit. Ease up. Paradise is just around the corner, and light does follow

darker stuff.

### Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

Resist the temptation to gossip and drag down fellow workers, friends, and relatives. Your critical attitudes do you well most of the time, but at certain times start to wear, mostly on you! Laugh a little, ease up with your life. It really is charmed, and so are you. Love a little, dare to skip class, skip work, hang out on the sofa, on the beach, in the pool hall. You will get it all done. This is your best time of the year.

### Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Saturn waltzes into your solar seventh house and unveils the need to be conscious and realistic about legal matters. Also, there is this cosmic trio in your fourth house (Venus, Mars and Neptune) and this will allow you to use the imagination and intuition you tend to try to hide with your friends. The full moon on the 14th brings a completion to projects that have been making you squeeze your eyebrows together creating those funny parallel lines on your forehead that are harbingers of crows feet and old age. For a Libra this is the ultimate warning to lighten up. Your face really will freeze that way.

The Dream Dragon is a Libra and a full-time student at UAS. She normally is a very balanced person, but her scales have tipped this month and are overloaded.

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### Native Club Open to All Students

By Alexandria Duguqua  
Whalesong Reporter

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is a private, nonprofit organization that strives to bridge science and technology with traditional Native values while helping students develop and build their leadership skills.

AISES was established nationally in 1977 by American Indian scientists, engineers and educators. Today there are over 124 AISES chapters in colleges and universities throughout the United States.

The AISES chapter located at UAS is the newest chapter in the state. Currently the group is working to send students from UAS to the National AISES Conference in Houston, which is held each November. To help raise funds for the trip the AISES group held a dinner fundraiser at DIPAC, Juneau's locally owned fish hatchery.

At the AISES National Conference, students meet other Native Americans in their field of study, said club organizer and student contact Collauna Dick. Dick is a junior in marine biology. Students will be introduced to several scholarship, internship and job opportunities at the conference as well.

AISES meetings are held on Thursday from noon-1:30 p.m.

Elections for the club were held recently and officers were installed. The president is Collauna Dick, vice president is Chohla Dick, secretary is Lillian Hunter and treasurer is Erica Carlson.

The club is not only for science and engineering majors. Students who are studying accounting, business, biology, chemistry, education, English and math are also invited to join. Pattie Adkisson, advisor to the group, said "you don't need to be Native to join AISES."

You can find out more about the club by stopping by the Native and Rural Student Center located in the Novatney Building, Room 213 or by calling Adkisson at 465-6454 or Dick at 790-4817.

### Christian Fellowship Club Helps Students Grow in Faith

By Alexandria Duguqua  
Whalesong Reporter

The UAS Christian Fellowship Club is now in its fifth year of existence. The Fellowship offers a weekly bible study group, available to both college students and non-college students. The club meets every Tuesday from 9-10:30 p.m. at the Chapel by the Lake, Room 204.

There are also overnight retreats for participants. The group does outreach and mission work and recently went to Haines to help with a lock-in night for youth in that community.

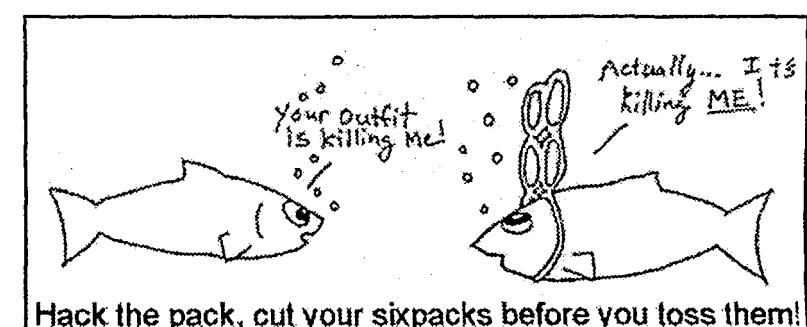
This semester there are around 30 students who attend the weekly meetings, according to Club Advisor Tommy Gordy, who is an associate pastor with the Glacier Valley Baptist Church.

They accept anyone regardless of what is wrong with their life, Gordy said. He added, "college students are mostly searching for answers in their life. What is truth? What is real? What is not real? We try to provide answers to life's questions for students."

The club provides a place for students to participate in prayers, songs and to discuss what is going on with their lives. The club "helps students grow in their Christian faith," said Gordy.

Everyone and anyone can join this club. According to Gordy, there are people who are involved in this club who are not affiliated with the university, and there are also UAS graduates who still attend meetings.

For more information on the Christian Fellowship you can contact Gordy at 789-7348 or 789-3953. The UAS student leader is Wade Berens, who is senior at UAS majoring in Liberal Arts. His number is 790-4396.



Cartoons Courtesy of Cody Bennett and the JDHS Phoenix Program



5.9 million acres of land were affected by forest fires in 1996, be careful!



# Call...

Continued from page 5

petencies. The legislature has created this exam as a means to punish schools and students who, for a variety of reasons, are not successful. I think it would be wise to first implement standards-based instruction and assessment, to provide massive professional development to teachers across the state, THEN consider a high stakes assessment as the final gatekeeper.

**Lesson number two:** state takeovers of schools have failed miserably in Kentucky and other states, resulting in lawsuits, and open hostility between the stakeholders and the government. There is currently a teacher's strike affecting 2.1 million students in Canada over the issue of local control of education.

This is the one area where I think the governor is truly misinformed. The classification system which will result in schools being labeled as in crisis also suggests that in extreme cases the Department of Education, with a team of distinguished educators will take over schools, and possibly withdraw funding, a clearly illegal act. We all know which schools would receive this hammer if the misguided policy were ever to become law. For the most part they will be schools attended by students in the lowest socioeconomic brackets across Alaska. Mostly, these will be rural schools, although there will probably be a few urban schools attended mostly by students who live in poverty, whose schools will be labeled as dysfunctional.

A recent study analyzing the performance of students in rural schools on standardized tests showed that although the students are still well below national and state averages for performance, the composite scores have nearly doubled since the rural schools first opened in the late seventies. How can a system where the test scores have doubled be labeled in crisis?

When we think about rural schools, we

have to remember that these schools are relatively new to the fabric of society in rural communities. There hasn't been generation after generation of parents who have attended public schools, as you will find in urban areas. The idea that a group of distinguished educators is going to fly out to rural districts with wisdom that has eluded the hard working professionals that have worked and lived in that environment is ludicrous. Again, before we pick up the hammer to punish schools and systems, let's lay the foundation for these systems to be successful.

The 1994 Rural Alaska Secondary Education Study Task Force Report states that "The State should enhance funding dedicated to the support of public education. It will be very difficult to improve the quality of rural high school education under the constant threat of declining funding. For rural communities and districts to offer a quality education, the state must ensure a more predictable and sustainable level of funding."

What needs to happen in order to create better schools in Alaska?

**1. School and Community Partnerships:** In communities where education is a priority, students achieve better. It's that simple. Schools and communities need to enter into a dialogue about what should be expected of students while respecting the knowledge and experience of professional educators. Schools need to interact with communities in ways other than requests for money. Part of the reason we are in desperate need for reform is a basic mistrust and lack of communication between the stakeholders of public education.

**2. Improved Teaching Force:** This needs to be addressed first by attracting and keeping the best teachers in the country to Alaska through higher salaries. When I began teaching in Alaska in 1985 our salaries were ranked the highest in the nation. Now we're ranked 26th. Last fall for the first time in recent memory, there weren't enough quali-

fied applicants to fill the teaching openings in Alaska. The situation is not going to get better as the current teaching force is replaced, and the number of school age children continues to increase. Anchorage alone is anticipating 250 openings for next year. The situation is particularly critical for rural districts who have been plagued by high turnover since the rural high schools were first opened. Unless the legislature addresses this need with additional funding, the teaching force will continue to decline.

As a classroom teacher I was deeply troubled by the fact that the professional organization that represented me, my teacher's union, also vigorously defended incompetent teachers when districts tried to remove them. As the teaching standards which are currently under development become a part of teacher evaluation, I'd like to see NEA and local education associations throughout the state work with districts to remove incompetent teachers from schools. If we're going to ask for higher salaries, professional development and improved opportunities for students to learn, we need to engage in a discussion about how we can work together to improve the teaching force. The argument that teacher evaluation is the administrator's job, and that unions are merely guaranteeing due process doesn't cut it. Until teachers acknowledge the problem of incompetent teachers and become a part of the process to address the issue, the teaching profession in Alaska will suffer because of it.

The other critical aspect to improving our teaching force is through quality preservice programs at our university system. Innovative programs like the standards-based Master of Arts in Teaching Program at UAS need to be duplicated throughout the state.

There needs to be a well-planned systematic course of action for professional development. Despite the popular view in the legislature, and often among the public, the art of teaching goes well beyond rote memorization and the assigning of work from textbooks. The body of research in cognitive development and elsewhere has yielded important insights into how students learn. In order for there to be systemic change in Alaskan schools, teachers need time and support in furthering their own knowledge and instructional skills. Our current system allows for as few as five days of inservice in some systems, and as little as 45 minutes of planning and collaboration time during the school day for teachers. As funding has been dramatically reduced over the last 15 years for school districts, funds for staff development have become scarce or non-existent.

In addition to rethinking the content of staff development opportunities, we need to reexamine the delivery models. The "Applied Research in Education Academies" offered throughout the state for the last 12 years are prime examples of the old paradigm of staff development. Teachers come together for a few days and receive course credit for passive learning. We need to provide opportunities where teachers are asked provocative questions about learning and assessment, where they have time to read, think, discuss and write about these issues. Examples would be the quality institutes provided by the Alaska State Writing Consortium, the Math and Science Consortiums, and recently, the Bread Loaf School of English, a new master's in English program conducted during the summers at UAS.

If the legislature wants world class

schools producing world class students, we need to provide the teaching force with the skills and resources to make this happen.

**3. Safe and Comfortable School Environments:** I just read recently that the legislature and the governor are working on a plan to address the critical needs arising from years of deferred maintenance and the under funding of capital projects. It is unthinkable that in a society with \$22 billion savings account, there are students attending classes in locker rooms, storage buildings, schools with leaking and unsafe roofs, and students sitting on the floor because of lack of space. Not only is this counter-productive to quality instruction, it threatens the physical well-being of our students. This is a very positive and important step toward improving our schools, and the legislature and the governor should be congratulated for addressing this aspect of school funding.

**4. Standards For All:** In addition to the content standards for students, there are also teacher standards, administrator standards and school standards in various stages of development. This process needs adequate support so that all elements of our education system will be equally responsible and accountable for student success.

**5. Culturally Responsive Schools:** The Rural Systemic Initiative has launched a major effort to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing into curriculum and assessment around the state. If we want students from diverse cultural backgrounds to be successful in schools, we need to look beyond our traditional western models of instruction, curriculum and assessment, and to incorporate diverse ways of thinking and learning. The "English Only" movement is counter productive to the multi-cultural, multi-lingual reality of Alaskan schools.

**6. Breaking the Mold:** Although there has been substantial change in elementary and middle school classrooms around the state, with increasing numbers of multi-age classrooms, schools within schools, interdisciplinary teaching, charter schools, language immersion programs, etc. there is a long way to go before our system reflects best practices in instruction. I think everything should be on the table: curriculum, scheduling, class size, physical space, instruction, assessment. All aspects of K-12 programs need review.

I'd like to ask educators to take an active part in the political process. Last year when the legislature was considering the exit exam, there was an eerie silence across the state as NEA-Alaska endorsed the legislation and it moved toward the governor's signature. Despite the fact that public school teachers have workloads that would be unthinkable in the private sector, and the immense constraints placed on educators work days, unless we enter the conversation with a voice which speaks not only to standards and assessment, but to opportunities to learn, and the realities of classrooms and schools, we can't expect the governor and the legislature to make informed, well-reasoned decisions.

Scott Christian teaches education classes at UAS. He is also the Director of the Educational Technology Center, which is housed at the Bill Ray Center.



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## Getting to Know Your Student Government Members

By Crystal Huskey  
Whalesong Reporter



Photos by Matt Miller

Student Senator Tanaya Hergert (left) tries to make point while Venietia Caruso listens during a recent meeting.

This is the third of a four-part series of short biographies on the student government members at UAS. Chances are that you have run into these fellow students quite often without knowing they were the students elected to represent you, the student body. If you have an issue to discuss with one of them, this is your chance to know who they are and bend their ears.

### Tenaya Hergert

Tenaya L. Hergert, a freshman at UAS, was elected in September to the student senate. "I wanted to get involved. If students are complaining, I can help do something about it," said Hergert. "I love student government because I can see how everything is put together."

Hergert serves on the Finance/Public Relations committee, is a co-club liaison, and sits on the Outdoor Recreation Board (ORB). Hergert is also a member of the Kayaking Club and Juneau Trails.

"My main goals for student government are to make students aware of who is on the student senate, encourage students to come to the senate meetings, and just let students know they can talk to us to help them resolve issues," she said.

Hergert is working toward a degree in social sciences with an emphasis in education. She plans to teach high school history. Hergert moved to Juneau in late August from Endicott, Wash., a small German farming community with a population of about 300. She said she had always wanted to visit Alaska. "I believe that if you like a place well enough to visit, you might as well live there," said Hergert. Another thing that attracted Hergert to Juneau was the scenery.

In her free time, Hergert can be found writing or participating in some type of outdoor activity.

### Venietia Caruso

UAS sophomore Venietia Caruso was elected vice president of the student senate last spring. She took over the posi-

tion on July 1.

"I want to make a difference. I want to try and make school more interesting, get students involved in their school, develop school spirit, and give students something to do," Caruso said.

She serves as the chair of the Activities Committee, and sits on the Finance and Rules Committees. She is a member of the Photography and Kayaking Clubs.

"Student government has a lot of new blood and a lot of potential. We're going to make our mistakes but hopefully we will learn from them. We're definitely getting things done. Having Rosie as president is a very good thing, and also our student senators are very involved," she said.

Caruso, who is from Connecticut, came to UAS because of the marine biology program offered here. "It's one of the best places to study humpback whales," she said. Juneau is quite a change for her. "Juneau is definitely a culture you have to get used to. It's a small town, but I like it."

In what little free time she has, she tries to spend time with her friends and boyfriend.

Caruso had the following statement for the student body: "Student government is here for you. Anything you see you want done or any complaints, come talk to us. We're here to listen and get things done for you."

### Michelle Hinckley

UAS freshman Michelle Hinckley earned her status as a student senator during the September elections. "I have a lot of experience in student government. I was a state-wide representative for high school students," she said.



Michelle Hinckley

Hinckley views her job as a senator as a very important one. "Student government has a lot of responsibilities," she said. "If I wasn't a student government member, I would look up to the student government members," added Hinckley. Hinckley currently sits on the Legislative and Rules Committees.

Hinckley moved to Juneau from Eagle, Alaska, a town with a population of 190 and located just east of Fairbanks. Her high school consisted of eight students.

Hinckley, who is majoring in elementary education, chose UAS for several reasons. "I looked into statistics on what they [UAS] offered, its setting, and its crime rate," she said. She plans on staying in Juneau for at least two years and then she is considering going somewhere on an exchange program.

Hinckley plays the guitar, keyboard, and does photography. She is also interested in teaching students to play guitar.

## UAS Classifieds

### Lost and Found

Winter is coming and I've lost my favorite black chenille scarf. It was left in the HB 110 room two weeks ago. Please return to Alexis at the Whalesong Office. You will make me very happy.

### Help Wanted

WANTED: Caring, energetic, creative men and women to provide respite for children/teens/adults who experience developmental disabilities. \$7.50 - \$10.00 / hour. Please call Mary Nelson, REACH, Inc. 586-8228

### Meetings

Gay/Lesbian Outreach AA, a regularly scheduled Alcoholics Anonymous meeting designed especially to welcome G/L Alcoholics to full, equal, regular participation in the Juneau Fellowship. Thursday 7 - 8 p.m. at Juneau Public Health Center, 1st Floor Conference Room, 3412 Glacier Highway Phone 586-1161 for more info

### For Sale

1986 Mustang: needs alternator to run, muffler to run quietly. A great beater for parts. Even comes with cool bumper stickers. Only \$50!! Call 789-9149

### Miscellaneous

Former UAS student looking for folks interested in weekend winter-camping trips. Prefer experienced traditional snowshoers. E-mail karlw@juneau.lib.ak.us

Copier cards for the Egan Library's new double-sided copy machine are available for purchase at the Circulation Desk. These re-useable cards may be purchased in \$5, \$10, or \$20 amounts. Faculty and departmental cards may also be obtained at the Circulation Desk.

UAS Students ... Do you have something to advertise? Take advantage of our FREE classifieds. Non-Student rates are \$10 for up to 25 words, and \$5 each subsequent issue same ad is run. Drop your ad off by our office downstairs in the Maurant Building.



Photo by Scott Foster

Floating and darting balloons fill the inside of Chapel by the Lake as 200 Juneau high school students learn a fun lesson about success and the various directions that life will take them. The exercise was part of "Senior Day" that was held Oct. 24 to acquaint them with their options after high school.

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